

moments at a time by missroserose

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Summary:

It's strange, how the math works out. The brunette boy, beautiful and polished and empty but for fear; the blond boy, dark and seductive and empty with hunger. Steve's never known a case where two zeroes add up to one, let alone two.

But then, he never much cared for math, anyway.

moments at a time

Author's Note:

Inspired by kelpie-earnest and uncaringerin's [Vampire AU](#) on tumblr.

Title from "Three Oh Nine", by Fenne Lily.

The circles beneath Steve's eyes are fading. His former gaunt and hollowed appearance is filling out, as if nourishing food and warmth have begun to play a larger role in his life. Occasionally he appears somewhere looking a little pale, ethereal; but this is usually in the middle of the night, and can easily be blamed on bad fluorescent lighting at the convenience store.

Steve sees the way Joyce looks at him, when they run into each other once; concerned, motherly. His own mother never looked at him that way: as if he existed separate from herself, someone to be acknowledged, to *be seen*. Joyce's face is full of a maternal empathy that Steve didn't know existed; it fills the empty space inside of him with bitterness as much as with longing. Her invitation to family dinner digs into his side, the guilt of putting her off somehow made sharper by those eyes that see and understand broken boys.

Steve's fingers find their way to the bruise at his neck, prodding, and he mutters something about basketball practice, about it being late, before he leaves, midnight snacks under one arm.

"Have you ever been bitten before? It's so good, man. You'll barely feel it, just a little pinch. God, you smell so good I swear I can't help myself."

Steve knows coercion when he hears it. In another life, he said many of the same things, mostly to girls. Girls he liked and girls he didn't care about. Sometimes he dropped them, the next day; sometimes they dropped him. Once or twice, they both stuck around, long enough to form an idea of a future together, a plan, a script to follow, until inevitably the girl saw the hollow interior beneath his shiny shell, saw that anything they built would be just like the Fabergé

eggs that Steve's mother collects. Carefully painted and polished and beautiful and completely hollow inside, useless except to sit on a shelf and be admired.

Steve never understood why they left. He'd been hollow all his life; the scion of soulless parents living soulless lives in a soulless town. It wasn't until the Upside Down, until something dark and menacing discovered that space, that he could *feel* the emptiness inside of him, could practically hear the chambers of his heart echoing with each beat.

And now it's taken root. Something that gobbles up his thoughts, snaps at the edges of his waking hours, presses against his eyes in the dark when he lays in bed, sleepless. Tainted, he can only quarantine himself, hope to keep it from spreading. Watch as the others inoculate themselves with laughter, with love and joy that fills them to bursting.

The blood leaving his body feels strangely sensual. Steve trembles in Billy's arms, whispering half-formed obscenities, spillovers of emotion abruptly unearthed after too long consigned to the cemetery. Those arms tighten around him, protective, shielding; Billy comes up just long enough to whisper. "I know, baby. I know. Shh. Let it out. You're so good. So good for me."

Steve makes a pleading sound and Billy pushes his fangs back in, takes more, leaves him lightheaded, untethered. When Billy finally pulls away, his lips are red with Steve's blood, his pupils blown dark as their eyes meet; he sways, the two of them moving in tandem as the earth no longer quite holds them. "Christ. You're such a fucking meal."

For a while, his dreams were full of darkness. Running, running; amorphous monsters giving chase, all the more terrifying for their lack of definition. Inhuman screeches and blind terror: of being caught, of stopping, of putting a foot wrong and falling through the earth, of putting a hand wrong and feeling a membrane stretch and snap, of tumbling head over heels through pollen and webs and vines and air that tasted *wrong*.

For a while, he'd wondered how he would manage, in the long term.

How much he could take before the perfect shell shattered, hollow interior suddenly clear for everyone to see, tendrils pushing out of him, taking over his life.

For a while, he'd wondered if it was better to put a stop to it altogether.

With luminous eyes Steve takes Billy in, the flush to his cheeks, the dark of his gaze. Guilt, shame, desire, dark pleasure—all of them rise up behind his throat, unacknowledged emotions from nameless graves now reanimated, insisting on release. He tilts his head, silently offering.

Billy's lips part, but he shakes his head, his bloodstained lips turning upward into a grin, lazy, sloppy. "No, sweetheart. Can't have you all at once, now, or there'll be nothing left for tomorrow."

"Then kiss me," Steve says. An impulse. An inevitability.

Billy's fangs are still out as their lips collide, and Steve's tongue catches on one, adding fresh blood to the mix. Billy's hand snakes up into Steve's hair as he licks the blood from Steve's mouth, already drunk on it, with the drunk's determination for more, more. Steve pulls Billy closer to him, tastes the richness of blood, feels Billy's cock filling out beneath those obscenely tight jeans; feels his own stiffening next to it, somehow both immediate and langorous at once. His heart echoes, urgent, more, more more more; Billy's lack of pulse only seems to envelop his own, as if Steve's heart beats for both of them.

Billy understands. Billy's lived with this emptiness a long time.

Steve eats more, now, his body craving food where before his throat would choke on solids. He sleeps through the night, held and protected; most days, he even makes it through school without incident. His nightmares and flashbacks are becoming a distant memory; noises from the woods no longer bother him. These days, even the threat of a resurgence seems distant, unimportant. What matters is blue eyes at twilight, intense, hotter and fiercer and more stunning than any sunset.

This time, Billy fucks him, slow and unhurried, lying on their sides, one

hand around Steve's swollen cock. Steve whimpers as the sensations build, deliberate, inexorable. It's good, so good, but better still is when Billy's thrusts grow erratic, when his fingers grow tight, when Steve can feel his own peak just out of reach, coming closer, closer.

"Take it," he whispers. Billy brings his mouth down, but pauses, coy. Steve feels his body wind up, tighten, hears Billy groan. "Fucking god, Billy, take it," he begs, half-crying with want, as the crest hits and he feels his body begin to slide into shudders, his thoughts to come apart—

Billy sinks his teeth into Steve's shoulder, and it's so much, too much; it's everything. Steve cries out—the hollowness is gone, the emptiness is gone, his body is gone, lost in a hurricane of sensation, of emotion. He can feel himself spilling across Billy's hand, can feel himself shaking, can feel the comedown looming. "Deeper," he gasps, and whether he means the fangs or the fucking neither of them know—for this moment, he's full, filled to the brim, to bursting, and that's enough.

After, sore and open and wrung from the inside out, Steve's breath takes a long time to return to normal. He rolls over Billy, kisses him. "I want your teeth on me. Everywhere. All over."

"Mmmmm." It's a luxuriant sound, a cat stretching in the sunlight. "It'll leave a lot of marks."

"Then leave them." Steve dips his head, brushes Billy's lips with his, pulls back again. "I want to be yours. Forever."

A moment, as his meaning sinks in, as the heat in his gaze penetrates, reflects in Billy's expression. "Fuck." He shifts, slides one hand up along Steve's cheek, and his face moves from desire to concern. "It'll change. You'll change. This will change."

"I know." Steve's breath catches. "Everything changes. This time, I want to choose." And he drops a kiss—a real kiss, this time—on Billy's lips. "I choose you. If you'll have me."

Billy laughs, softly. "You're gonna be the death of me, sweetheart."

Steve smiles, a pyre blazing in his eyes. "More likely the other way

around, wouldn't you say?"

It's strange, how the math works out. The brunette boy, beautiful and polished and empty but for fear; the blond boy, dark and seductive and empty with hunger. Steve's never known a case where two zeroes add up to one, let alone two.

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Billy's kisses trail along his body, fangs leaving tracks down his torso. They puncture his wrists, the inside of his elbow, behind his ear, the back of his knee. And with each bite, Steve feels a little lighter, a little freer. He wonders why it took him so long to realize that death is not something to be feared. Death is reliable, omnipresent; a long-lost friend, always nearby, ready to take you back home.

His breath is coming fast and shallow by the time Billy works his way up to Steve's thigh. He hovers for a moment, looks up, and Steve thinks that this image of Billy's eyes, burning blue in the semidarkness, is the most beautiful thing he's ever seen. He wonders if he'll ever see them again. If they'll look different when he does.

"Will it hurt?" Steve's voice is barely more than a breath.

"Yes. Change always hurts." A beat. Billy's voice is low. "Do you want it?"

One last heartbeat. One last look.

Then Steve closes his eyes, sighs. "Yeah. I do."

Author's Note:

You can find me on [tumblr](#), now.